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Letter dated 10 March 2011 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication dated 3 March 2011, which I have received from the Deputy Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Claudio Bisogniero, transmitting the quarterly report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 November 2010 to 31 January 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Please recycle

Annex

Letter dated 3 March 2011 from the Deputy Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1943 (2010), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan covering the period from November 2010 to January 2011 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Claudio **Bisogniero**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, pursuant to the request under Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1943 (2010), informs the United Nations on the progress of the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) covers the period from 1 November 2010 to 31 January 2011. As at 3 February 2011, total ISAF strength stood at 131,983 personnel provided by 28 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations and 20 non-NATO nations. No additional nation has been added since the last report.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF continued to assist the Government of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 November 2010 to 31 January 2011, ISAF suffered 1,347 casualties, including 114 killed in action, 1,222 wounded in action and 11 non-battle-related deaths.

3. Over the last reporting period, ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces continued the high operational tempo and made promising security gains across Afghanistan. ISAF assessment recognizes the insurgent momentum to be broadly arrested, even reversed in some key areas. Recent nationwide survey results suggest that Afghans are more comfortable moving outside their villages and neighbourhoods during the day. However, corruption in Afghanistan[1] poses a serious risk to mission success and progress across all sectors. Although still addressing the challenge of attrition and leadership deficits, Afghan National Security Forces growth remains ahead of schedule with continued positive recruiting trends. Focusing on the ultimate objective of enabling Afghanistan to become self-reliant and sustainable in the very near term, NATO and ISAF invite additional States Members of the United Nations to support this United Nations-mandated mission by providing trainers and mentors for the Afghan National Security Forces as well as the civilian sectors of governance and development.

Noteworthy points for this reporting period include the following:

(a) On 13 November 2010 the first meeting of the Joint Afghan NATO Inteqal Board was held to review progress made thus far in the Inteqal (transition) process and to finalize the way forward. The Board, chaired by Ashraf Ghani, agreed to a joint assessment; to set guidelines for the evolution of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams; to complete the first joint assessment of provincial transition readiness by the end of February 2011 and to make recommendations for those areas which might be ready to begin the transition in 2011;

(b) At the Lisbon Summit meeting of 19-20 November 2010, Heads of State and Government of NATO/ISAF nations agreed that together with the Government of Afghanistan they are entering a new phase of the joint effort, which allows helping to set the conditions for irreversible transition to full Afghan security responsibility and leadership. They reaffirmed their support for President Karzai's objective for

[1] Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index 2010, Afghanistan was placed 176 of 178 countries worldwide.

the Afghan National Security Forces to lead and conduct security operations in all provinces by the end of 2014. They also announced a long-term partnership between Afghanistan and NATO, demonstrating that the alliance's commitment to Afghanistan will endure beyond the current mission of ISAF and is intended to be consistent with broader international efforts under United Nations leadership;

(c) On 6-7 December 2010, former President Rabbani (Chairman of the High Peace Council) and Minister Stanekzai (Director of the High Peace Council) led the first Regional Reintegration Conference in Kandahar, in order to encourage governors and generate more momentum for reintegration efforts. This event was followed by additional conferences in other regions that endorsed reintegration councils in an effort to support their emergence across the country. ISAF will continue to support further development and implementation of the reintegration programme;

(d) President Karzai inaugurated the Afghan National Assembly on 26 January 2011, after having resolved key differences in the days leading up to the event. The inauguration took place with wide participation from the international community and Afghan-led security operations prevented any major security incidents.

Security situation

4. During this reporting period, significant security gains were made, especially in the south of Afghanistan, the traditional heartland of the insurgency. Earlier gains, such as those in the Afghan capital, were successfully consolidated. The Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF operations have continued to increase pressure on insurgent networks over the past several months, with larger and more focused security operations. Reducing civilian casualties remains a fundamental mission priority and continues to pay dividends, as the number of those caused by ISAF continues to drop year by year. The insurgents' freedom of movement, logistical capacity and command and control has been degraded. However, the Afghan security environment remains complex, with a resilient and adaptive insurgency that still retains the ability to attack the Government of Afghanistan, Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF. Many of the regional and domestic factors that sustain the insurgency and impede effective counter-insurgency operations remain in place. The insurgents are likely to retain some freedom of movement, mainly in rural areas with less Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF presence, as long as they have access to external safe havens and support networks. The strategic goal of the insurgency remains unchanged: surviving in order to remain an alternative to the Kabul Government and causing significant losses to ISAF in order to undermine international support for the mission and prompt a withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan before the mission is complete.

5. Regionally, the security situation can be described as follows:

(a) *Regional Command Capital*. The security situation in Kabul can best be described as calm, with Afghan National Security Forces firmly in control of the capital. However, even the most stringent security measures cannot prevent occasional insurgent attacks such as the 28 January 2011 suicide attack, which, among others, killed the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commissioner, Hamida Barkai, and her family;

(b) *Regional Command North*. The Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF clearing operations have successfully displaced insurgents from key areas for

security in the region and are currently denying the insurgency their freedom of movement and hampering their intent to distract ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces with increased presence in the north;

(c) *Regional Command West*. Continuing ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces operations conducted during this reporting period have had a significant impact on the insurgency. Numerous reintegration opportunities have emerged, particularly in Badghis and Farah provinces, which could indicate that insurgent losses are having an impact on their morale and willingness to continue fighting against the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF;

(d) *Regional Command South*. The large security operations in and around Kandahar city have resulted in a significantly improved security situation. Responsibility for the security of Kandahar city is now largely in the hands of the Afghan National Security Forces, assisted by ISAF;

(e) *Regional Command Southwest*. The Afghan National Security Forces partnered with ISAF have been conducting major operations in the region in order to assert government control. A number of traditional insurgent sanctuaries in Helmand Province have been cleared, and the last remaining insurgent sanctuaries are gradually being reduced. Operations to connect the security bubble in Helmand east towards Kandahar city have commenced, and the key districts in this area are no longer considered among the most violent districts in the south;

(f) *Regional Command East*. The eastern part of Afghanistan, bordering the Pakistan Federally Administered Tribal Areas, remains an important area for the insurgency, providing access to external sanctuaries and resupply areas. The Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF have started operations to deny the insurgents freedom of movement in this area of Afghanistan, seeking to cut insurgent supply routes.

6. The improvised explosive device still remains the most significant threat to the International Security Assistance Force, the Afghan National Security Forces, the Government of Afghanistan and Afghan civilians. To address these challenges, ISAF has invested considerably into defeating the threat by detecting and clearing the devices, disrupting insurgent networks and training the Afghan National Security Forces in counter-improvised explosive device techniques, all of which lead to an increase in clearance operations and improvised explosive device finds (representing 60 per cent of all improvised explosive device events). Additionally, at the end of the reporting period, the weapons cache finds have risen significantly. This may indicate the increasing cooperation of the Afghan population.

Afghan National Security Forces

7. The Afghan National Security Forces has made significant progress during the period and the capability and capacities of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior to man, train, equip and support their police and soldiers have increased. The Afghan National Security Forces training capacity has continued to grow with roughly 30,000 soldiers and policemen now participating in various training programmes. All members of the Afghan National Security Forces are now attending basic training, which includes survivability, professionalism and literacy training (approximately 47,000 enrolled as of 18 January 2011) before being assigned. A dedicated focus on developing Afghan leaders has led to increased

leadership capability and accountability at all levels. Approximately 1,000 Afghan National Security Forces personnel are involved in training in 21 countries outside Afghanistan and 11 out of 12 planned Afghan National Army branch schools are now operational in Afghanistan. Finally, salaries have been increased to provide a living wage and improved distribution methods have reduced the potential for predatory corruption.

8. The second group of Afghan women officers started on 26 December 2010. These women were the second group to enter the rigorous Officer Candidate School. However, women are still drastically underrepresented and make up only 0.5 per cent of the Afghan National Security Forces.

9. The progress in these areas has enabled the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police to attain their 2010 strength goals and begin to professionalize and increase the Afghan National Security Forces to 171,600 Afghan National Army and 134,000 Afghan National Police personnel by October 2011. For 2011, the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF will maintain the momentum established during 2010 and reinforce efforts dealing with attrition, leader shortfalls, and corruption within the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, all challenges that could severely undermine professionalization, delay growth and degrade quality. However, the single greatest driver of successful Afghan National Security Forces growth and improved quality is the national contributions of highly qualified trainers that in sufficient numbers ultimately will enable the Afghan National Security Forces to develop self-sustaining security systems and enduring institutions. The future growth of the Afghan National Security Forces is under review and is expected to be decided by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board on 8 March 2011.

Afghan National Army

10. During the reporting period, the Afghan National Army strength expanded to approximately 152,000 with about 23,000 soldiers and officers assigned to various training programmes as of 26 January 2011. Overall, the Afghan National Army continued to make progress towards its October 2011 target of 171,600.

11. In general terms, the Afghan National Army enjoyed success during the period, most notably operating more independently or in the lead of operations, thwarting planned attacks, responding to complex attacks and handling of improvised explosive devices/countering improvised explosive devices, thereby increasing the Afghan population's confidence in the Afghan National Army. These successes are tempered by sporadic negative incidents where ISAF soldiers are attacked by rogue Afghan National Security Forces personnel.

12. The effectiveness of Afghan National Army forces is constantly improving. More than 65 per cent of all Kandaks are now rated as either "effective with advisers" or "effective with assistance", compared to 51 per cent during the last reporting period. It is likely that this development can be linked to a similar improvement in the overall partnering ratio, where 67 per cent of all Kandaks are now either "embedded" or "partnered" compared to 55 per cent during the last reporting period. Challenges to operational capabilities of the fielded Afghan National Army are still in the areas of staff planning, Tactical Operations Centre management, logistics, and leadership.

Afghan Air Force

13. The Afghan Air Force continues to make steady progress in increasing its capabilities. The NATO Air Training Command Afghanistan has received valuable training support from several nations. These national teams will add vital expertise and capabilities for the growth and professionalization of the Afghan Air Force. The Afghan Air Force also recently received 8 new Mi-17 helicopters, bringing the total number to 35. In addition, they have nine Mi-35 helicopters, three An-32 aircraft and eight C-27 aircraft as of 12 January 2011.

14. The Afghan Air Force increased its operational capability by establishing routine medical evacuation flight sorties between Kandahar and Kabul. In December 2010, the Afghan Air Force air operations took a noteworthy step forward with the successful support provided to the President of Afghanistan during his visits to various parts of the country.

Afghan National Police

15. During 2010, the Afghan National Police strength grew by close to 21,000, expanding the force to approximately 116,856 as of 12 January 2011. Overall, the Afghan National Police continued to make progress towards its future October 2011 target of 134,000 with about 8,800 policemen currently assigned to various training programmes.

16. The effectiveness of Afghan National Police forces is continuously increasing and more than 69 per cent of all Afghan Uniformed Police elements rated are now rated as either "effective with advisers" or "effective with assistance" compared to 40 per cent during last reporting period.

17. The Afghan National Police training capacity is increasing as existing training sites are being expanded, with an estimated increase from 11,252 to 15,272 training seats next quarter. New training sites are being brought on line and opportunities for training outside the country are developed.

18. Attrition still remains the largest challenge for the Afghan National Police, frequently higher than the monthly goal of 1.4 per cent, particularly for Afghan National Civil Order Police and Afghan Border Police. To address the ongoing challenges the Ministry of Interior has implemented policies to address attrition, corruption and low literacy rates. The personnel policies have been modified to ensure that all newly recruited personnel receive formal training prior to assignment. The sequence is now "Recruit -- Train — Assign". The NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, has initiated a four-week intensive literacy course for Afghan National Civil Order Police recruits prior to the beginning of the normal programme of instruction. This initiative has facilitated the dramatic increase in recruiting by opening a much larger recruiting pool previously unavailable to the Afghan National Civil Order Police.

Institutional capacity

19. Development of the institutional capabilities of the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior has continued to make progress this quarter. The Ministry of Defence has made substantial changes to increase accountability, improve efficiency, and build security. Change is supported by new laws to improve personnel policies such as the Inherent Law on Officers and Non-Commissioned

Officers and new regulations to improve retention, information sharing, and cooperation. Several of the high-level leaders within the Ministry of Interior have been replaced, resulting in increased coordination between the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence. Additional positive changes are that Ministry of Interior logistics continues to progress towards a national-level system.

20. The newly revised and released Afghan National Police National Police Strategy will be an imperative and adaptive framework for building the future Afghan police system. The strategy specifies the objectives for continued development of the police, law enforcement activities and associated system, including the Ministry of Interior six priorities for the next five years:

(a) Training and education;

(b) Police leadership development;

(c) Anti-corruption (including code of conduct and ethics for the police);

(d) Improve the living standards and working environment of the police;

(e) Review and modify the Tashkil;

(f) Develop a system of rewards and punishment to ensure greater accountability.

Private security companies

21. On 6 December 2010, the Ministry of Interior announced that the remaining 52 legal private security companies would be able to continue to operate in Afghanistan, although with some regulations and uncertainties regarding their future. Crucially, it seems that those private security companies providing static guarding for Embassies and key international community sites remain exempt from the ban. The dissolution of private security companies, for many groups, organizations and foreign governments, has the potential to limit development projects and restrict aid organizations in the conduct of their work. ISAF is working with the Government of Afghanistan to develop an acceptable bridging solution that encourages a decreasing reliance on private security companies and an increasing use of the nascent Afghan Public Protection Force of the Ministry of Interior.

Afghan Local Police

22. The growing Afghan Local Police initiative, under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, is gaining traction with increasing numbers of sites and greater Afghan responsibility. The current status of the Afghan Local Police is 16 operational sites, with a total number of approximately 3,150 Afghan Local Police recruits. ISAF and coalition forces are working together with the Ministry of Interior to determine the correct resources required to effectively partner the Afghan Presidential authorization of 10,000 personnel Afghan Local Police members.

Civilian casualties

23. The overall number of civilian casualty incidents is continuing to decrease, following the seasonal trend, and the number of ISAF-caused civilian casualties is also down slightly as compared to 2009. However, the number of civilian casualties caused by ISAF this quarter slightly increased in comparison with the same period

last year. ISAF maintains its commitment to minimize civilian casualty incidents. Insurgents caused more than 84 per cent of casualties among the Afghan civilians.

Counter-narcotics

24. There has been progress in reducing narcotic production in Afghanistan during the last reporting period. However, increased prices for opium will result in strong economic pressure to increase poppy cultivation for 2011. Last year, significant local seizures of narcotics occurred but it was the poppy blight that was most significant in reducing opium production. While estimates vary, the profits from narcotics remain a significant source of local funding for the insurgency. Counter-narcotic activities require constant pressure by the Government of Afghanistan with international and ISAF support to maintain and augment counter-narcotic gains.

25. The provision and promotion of alternative livelihoods to opium cultivation has largely been limited to programmes that incentivize the planting of alternative licit crops. Wheat and saffron are only two of the more prominent among a wide variety of licit crops. Furthermore, a regional approach involving the Russian Federation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics supported a holistic strategy on counter-narcotics, with a focus on justice initiatives, demand-reduction, law enforcement operations and medical care.

Governance

26. The improving security environment that ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces are creating in and around the major population centres have produced additional opportunities for development of local governance. Noteworthy for the reporting period are the following:

(a) ISAF and the Government of Afghanistan outreach in the south have shown some signs of improvement to existing low levels of district governance. The increasing numbers of newly assigned governors, police chiefs, mediators and prosecutors, noted by local shuras, can improve the preconditions to provide the population with governmental options to resolve disputes;

(b) ISAF is coordinating closely with the various ministries in Kabul to help provide the subnational levels with the additional tools and authorities to expand the civil service sector. On 27 January, the Afghan Civil Service Institute graduated its inaugural class of over 3,200 students from across Afghanistan;

(c) More Afghans believe that the Government of Afghanistan is heading in the right direction than it was six months ago. Also, 74 per cent of the Afghans say that the Government of Afghanistan has more influence in their village compared with 68 per cent in mid-2010. Although less than 50 per cent believe the Government of Afghanistan is currently able to do its job, more people seem to have increased confidence (46 per cent) in its capacity to ensure the security;

(d) In areas where security is good or improving, people tend to be more satisfied with their overall quality of life and more confident in the overall capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to do its job. The performance of the local, district and provincial governmental institutions is reflected in the way people perceive the central Government.

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27. The reporting period witnessed an increase in reintegration opportunities for insurgents that are attributable to the effects of the counter-insurgency campaign, the increased operational tempo of ISAF and the Afghan National Security Forces and increased visibility of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme. The increased awareness of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme is a result of the High Peace Council working with Provincial Governors and improved Government of Afghanistan support. In recent polling, 70 per cent of the Afghan people reported that they would welcome back these insurgents into the community if they would stop fighting.

28. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been seeking to engage with Afghan authorities at all levels of governance to gradually create the preconditions for transition to Afghan authorities. In addition, the Joint Afghan NATO Inteqal Board agreed to set guidelines for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in order to progressively achieve civilian leadership.

Development

29. Facilitated by ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces operational progress, this reporting period continued to witness improved coordination of security and development efforts. Although there is great potential in Afghanistan, there was only slight real economic improvement during this reporting period. Noteworthy for this reporting period are the following:

(a) With ISAF support, the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock initiated a Wheat Seed Distribution Programme in December 2010 to give 360,000 Afghan farmers 50 kilograms of seed and 150 kilograms of fertilizers each;

(b) On 11 December, leaders of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India signed an inter-governmental agreement for the trans-Afghan gas pipeline project. This project will ultimately provide thousands of new jobs for Afghans and solve energy needs of the nation and in the end offer strong support for improvements made in the security sector;

(c) In Kandahar city, the Afghan national power utility turned on the first of two 10MW diesel power-generation plants in December 2010. This important ISAF-supported project will supply 8MW of continuous power for at least 16 hours a day throughout the city. Improved electrical infrastructure, with the attendant increase in jobs and economic opportunities, will reinforce security gains by demonstrating to the people that the Government of Afghanistan has more to offer than the insurgents;

(d) The mining industry has shown great promise to sustain economic development with an estimate of up to $3 trillion of untapped mineral resources. The generated increase in the revenues of the Government of Afghanistan is a first sign of fiscal sustainability in the medium term. However, this positive economic context generated by a favourable security climate in several regions remains fragile.

30. The explicit link between security, governance and development has once again been highlighted during the reporting period. Simultaneous steps forward in all three areas are required in order to support transition to Afghan authorities and enable them to effectively take over the security leadership in 2014.